



NEWS

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Record Numbers of Californians Wearing Seat Belts

Seat Belt Statistics Announced At Statewide Law Enforcement Awards Ceremony

(SACRAMENTO) – A record number of California motorists are wearing their seat belts, according to federal statistics released today at the California Law Enforcement Challenge awards. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's yearly tabulation for 2005 shows that 92.5 percent of all California vehicle occupants are wearing their seat belts. That number is up from 90.4 percent for 2004. The survey is taken during June of each year nationwide. California has the fifth highest compliance rate in the nation.

The announcement was made by Business, Transportation & Housing Agency Secretary Sunne Wright-McPeak during a gathering of California traffic safety professionals in Sacramento. "A two percent increase in just one year is quite an accomplishment. This stems from a lot of hard work from all of you in this room and your colleagues," said Secretary McPeak.

The California Law Enforcement Challenge recognizes those departments which have developed outstanding programs in various areas of traffic safety. "Today we are recognizing these departments with plaques, but the real award is the number of lives saved through the tireless efforts of these traffic safety organizations," said CHP Deputy Commissioner Joe Farrow.

The Fresno Police Department won the Commissioner's Award for overall excellence in traffic safety. The San Jose Police Department won for Best DUI Program, Fresno Police Department for Underage Drinking Program, the Moreno Valley Police Department for Occupant Protection (Seat Belts), the Clovis Police Department for Child Passenger Safety and Speed Enforcement programs, and the San Francisco Police Department for Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety.

The following departments were presented with First Place awards for their size category: Lathrop Police Department (11-25 Sworn Personnel), El Paso de Robles Police Department (26-50), Clovis Police Department (51-100), Moreno Valley Police Department (101-250), San Bernardino Police Department (251-500), Fresno Police Department (501-1,000), San Jose Police Department (1,001 -2,000), Los Angeles Police Department (2,001 +). In the Special Awards Category:

In the CHP categories the recipients are: Central Los Angeles Area Office and San Geronio Pass tied for the Commissioner's Award. Susanville Area Office for Occupant Protection, San Geronio Pass for DUI, Oakland Area Office and San Jose Area Office tied for Underage Drinking Program achievement, South Los Angeles Area Office for Child Passenger Safety, Bakersfield for Speed, and South Sacramento for Bicycle/Pedestrian safety.

The following CHP commands were recognized with First Place honors in their size category: Susanville (1-25 Sworn Personnel), San Geronio Pass (26-50) Modesto (51-75), Oakland (76-100), Central Los Angeles (101+), and Calexico (Inspection Facilities).

During the past year, the CHP has partnered with Caltrans, DMV, Alcoholic Beverage Control, Office of Traffic Safety, and local law enforcement for Operation STAR, combining resources to improve traffic safety in California. The combined efforts are paying off. Just this Labor Day weekend the number of fatalities on California roadways dropped to 34 from 53 during Labor day 2004.

"We congratulate all these law enforcement personnel for their dedication to traffic safety it is a cooperative effort, but we also wish to commend the news media for helping carry the message to the public, and the public itself for cooperating in this life-saving effort," stated Deputy Commissioner Farrow.

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